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Christianity distinguished by its name.

*The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts xi. 26.*

THE high importance of Christianity, to man, fully apologizes for every well meant attempt to illustrate and recommend it. The design of the following dissertation is to consider the import of its name.

From the first use of language the design of names has been to distinguish their subjects from other individuals of the same species, or from other species of the same kind, or they have denoted general objects. They supercede the necessity of endless circumlocution, and facilitate the communication of knowledge, by writing and the intercourse of social life. Though they may be viewed as in a sense arbitrary, it is evident they originated, at least frequently, in a supposed adaptedness to express the most distinguishing quality, relation, or circumstance of the subject. The scripture account of the

names given to the first human pair by God, and to the animal world by Adam, is agreeable to this view.\* And many passages in scripture history convey the same idea.

The scriptural text with which these observations are introduced, refers to an event important in the history of the primitive Church. Antioch was a large city, at a distance from Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Syria, known in the prophecy of Daniel by the epithet of "the Kingdom of the North;" as that of Egypt is by "the Kingdom of the South." It consisted of that part of the Empire of Alexander the Great, which fell to Antiochus in the division of the Empire among his four principal Captains, which took place in a few years after the death of that conqueror.

This City was built by Antiochus, and named by him to perpetuate the remembrance of his glory. In this, as in most populous places of the East, many

\* Gen. i. 26. and ii. 19, 20—23.

Jews had long dwelt among the Gentiles, who were the principal inhabitants. Happily for many there, the persecution of the disciples of Christ, in which the holy Stephen sealed the gospel testimony with his blood, occasioned such a dispersion of the disciples and preachers of the gospel, that some of them travelled as far as Antioch, preaching the gospel, "and the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord." And although they preached the word to Jews only, it pleased God to make it successful to Gentiles, opening the door of faith to them also. Such is the fulness of divine grace that God is found even of those who sought him not. The conversion of Jews and Gentiles to the Christian faith, in the same city, prepared the way for their union in the same congregation, for the celebration of divine worship and ordinances; and their frequent intercourse, in that near relation, must have produced frequent occasion to mention each other, by their national distinction. This tended to excite their respective national prejudices, and to marr the happiness of their union in the Christian church. A common name seemed well adapted to prevent the evil, and none could have been invented so agreeable and proper as one derived from that of their common Lord. This would prevent the evil resulting from the frequent mention of their national distinction, express their united reverence to their master, the divine author of their religion, and would effectually distinguish them from the votaries of all other religions.

This worthy name was evidently in a high degree proper, as Christ was the Alpha and Omega of their religion, and their hope; their Prophet, Priest and King. It is also well known to the learned, that various sects of heathen philosophers were at that time denominated from their leaders and founders.

This name, however, seems not to have been assumed by the disciples of Christ merely from human views of propriety.

The Greek word here rendered *called*, is not the usual word so rendered. It properly imports a particular divine agency, influence or direction, and may be very literally rendered *divinely called*. We find the word in some of its formations several times used in the Greek Testament, in all of which it has a signification similar to that just mentioned.\*

On the whole, we may be well satisfied of the propriety of the name given to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, at Antioch, and that in receiving it they acted by divine direction; their religion is, therefore, termed *Christianity*. In illustrating the propriety of this name, we shall be led to notice a few leading marks of distinction between this religion and all other religions among men.

We shall take our view of Christianity from the sacred book in which it is revealed. It is, however, to be remembered, that we consider the whole volume of scripture as containing a divine revelation of this

\* Matt. ii. 12—22. Luke ii. 26. Acts x. 22. Heb. viii. 5.—xi. 7.—xii. 15.

religion. The Old Testament as constituting the first part, and the New Testament the second and last.

The distinction between Christianity and all other religions respects its doctrines, its moral precepts and the prospects which it opens; but to consider these grand divisions in all their ramifications would require many volumes. We shall, therefore, pursue the following concise arrangement of a few leading marks of distinction, viz.

The object of worship,  
The ground of acceptance,  
The system of morality, and  
The retributions of futurity.

I. We attend to the distinctions in the object of worship.

Christianity teaches the worship of the one living and true God, in distinction from the polytheism of all systems of Pagan theology. It teaches that this God is eternal and independent, in distinction from the genealogies and dependent succession of their numerous divinities. They had their Jupiter optimus maximus, or their greatest God, their Dii majores or Gods greater than another class whom they called their household Gods. All these had a beginning, and were dependent, the less on the greater, and all on their Supreme Jupiter, and he on fate, which the best of them believed to be above the Gods.

Christianity teaches that this one God is possessed of all natural perfection, originally and independently; that he is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and immutable, in distinction from the total deficiency and imperfection of their divini-

ties, in all these respects; and that he exists in that infinitely perfect manner called a *Trinity in unity*, possessing the whole perfection of unity and of Trinity, the whole benefit of both, in all respects and especially in this, that he enjoys independent communion in himself, as an incommunicable perfection of Jehovah, in distinction from the solitary, imperfect and dependent unity of the object of worship in the Mahometan system.

This is usually expressed by a personal distinction in the Deity, because there is an evident foundation for the application of the three personal epithets, *I, Thou and He*, as used in common language; though we by no means comprehend that distinction in the infinitely perfect manner of the divine existence, as distinguished from that of created, dependent and imperfect beings; we, however, can perceive it to be necessary to independent perfection and felicity, and can apprehend no more difficulty in the belief of this doctrine, than of any other truth of natural or revealed religion, which exceeds our comprehension. We therefore rest with unwavering faith in the true and proper divinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that "*these three are one*."

This triune Deity, who is the object of Christian worship, is also possessed of infinite moral perfection, or he is immutably good. It is a dictate of right reason that a Being possessed of such natural perfections as the holy scriptures ascribe to the object of worship, and existing in such a manner, must be infinitely perfect in his moral

character, or must be good.—But in this we are not left to the mere light of human reason. Divine revelation is abundant in ascribing all possible moral excellence to God, as a Being essentially and unchangeably holy, just and good, wise and faithful, and summarily assures us that “*God is love.*” In these sacred writings we are assured that God is the fountain of all existence, the creator and preserver of Angels and men; that his dominion in the natural and moral world is universal and perfect; that his providence extends to all events, and that he governs moral and accountable creatures by the most perfect laws; that he is the kind and beneficent parent of the whole creation, and encourages his rational offspring to address him in prayer and praise.

Such a Being, and such only, can be the proper object of worship. He is present and knows all our wants, and is able to satisfy them. He governs all events in the universe; all creatures and events are in his hand, and he can protect and save us from evil. He is the father of our spirits and the former of our bodies, and is the kindest of parents, and a very present help in trouble. Into the bosom of such infinite sufficiency, and parental love the full soul may pour all its troubles; in him the fatherless findeth mercy—and he hath said, “call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

But how shall guilty, unworthy sinners have access to such a Being of infinite majesty, perfection and purity?

The answer to this most interesting question will be found

in the next mark of distinction between Christianity and all other religions, which is,

## II. The ground of acceptance.

That man is, naturally, in a state of sin and ruin, is obvious to every reflecting mind, and has accordingly been perceived and lamented by most writers among the heathen philosophers; indeed a consciousness of guilt and exposedness to punishment is common to men; hence the anxious inquiry, “Where with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the Most High God?”

The best answers to this most interesting question, furnished from philosophic investigations, are wholly unsatisfactory.

Most of the heathen writers on this subject, manifest some notion of sacrifices, of some kind, to appease the anger of their Gods and obtain their favor. This, probably, originated in some knowledge of ancient tradition, conveying partial information from the possessors of divine revelation on this subject, but so mangled and perverted, as to be totally insufficient to relieve the wounded conscience, or to enable the sinner to contemplate, with composure, his appearance before God.

The next relief attempted by philosophy, is by a virtuous life, or by repentance and reformation; but alas, how insufficient this, for the transgressor!—What rational hope can be derived from this to the sinner who “owes ten thousand talents and has nothing to pay?”

Were his repentance and reformation even perfect, they could have no influence to atone for past offences, and could be



only adequate to present duty. But when we consider the great imperfection of human nature, even in the best, they appear to fall far below the standard of present duty, and greatly increase our guilt and desert of condemnation. What shall we think then of the absurd and superstitious rites which generally obtained among the heathen on this subject, and of the unhallowed usages practised for this purpose, by them in their religious festivals, on days of atonement? Or what can more deeply impress the mind with a conviction of the necessity of a divine revelation, than the knowledge of the notions and usages of heathen Idolaters?

The Christian revelation represents our sin and misery as they really are; it clearly evinces the impossibility of the most distant, well founded hope of acceptance with God, from any or all the devices of man, and proves that "reason pursued is despair." But at the same time, it opens a new and glorious door of hope: It reveals the mediatorial plan of redemption by Jesus Christ.

This assures us, that God has fixed on a method for the display of mercy to the guilty, through a mediator; that this mediator is the Son of God, the second person in the divine Trinity in unity; that he was to redeem sinners of mankind to God by making atonement for their sin, and bringing in everlasting righteousness; and that to fit him for the mediatorial work, he should be united to our nature, by the assumption of it into a personal union with his divine nature; and accordingly we are assured, that

"the word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and "God was manifest in flesh." In this mysterious union of natures, our Lord Jesus Christ was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, and truly magnified the divine law, and supported both its precepts and sanctions. The final condemnation of all sinners would have proved the immutable determination of God to punish sin according to his threatenings; but this proves still more—it evinces that God is righteous in taking vengeance, and that in his government over man, he treats him as he would be willing to be himself treated, in a change of circumstances.

The obedience and death of Christ in our nature and place, is the highest conceivable divine testimony to the rectitude of the moral government of God over man; and is therefore the most full and complete expression of holy affection, exhibiting the most conclusive proof of the perfection of divine government and of the evil of sin; and thus lays a foundation for the pardon and salvation of sinners through Christ, in the way of divine appointment, so as to be at once a vindication and expression of the righteousness of God in his government of man, an exhibition of the most profound wisdom, and of the richest grace. Yea, all divine perfections are here not only displayed; but unitedly displayed, it is "grace reigning through righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Hence it appears, that "Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life," and that "no man cometh to the Father but by him;" that he is able to save,

to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him; that this gospel foundation of acceptance with God for sinners, is worthy of God, honorable to law and justice, a most wonderful expression of divine grace, and safe and happy for the believing sinner, and superior to all the plans devised by man, whether Jew or Gentile, ignorant or learned, as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Faith in Christ is the divinely appointed way in which we become so interested in his atonement, that his righteousness avails for our pardon and acceptance with God, evidently, because by this we are so united to him that the Father's approbation of his mediatorial work may be properly and fully expressed in the bestowment of all saving mercy on us for his sake.

The most guilty and miserable of our race may, therefore, hope in divine mercy through him, come to God by him, and be assured that "those who so come he will in no wise cast out."

III. The Christian religion is distinguished from all others by its system of morality.

It has been common to the founders of religious systems to inculcate something under the name of virtue or morality, but in most instances many essential branches of virtue have been omitted, and many things inculcated which were really vicious; and what is still worse, the true and essential distinction between virtue and vice has been commonly overlooked; hence the very best systems of heathen morality are essentially deficient.

All human systems of moral-

ity begin and end in those things which are private and personal. After all which has been written by poets, philosophers and moralists, not drawn from the holy scriptures, on virtue and morality, they teach us nothing more sublime than the love of our country; and to die for our country is treated by them as the most sublime virtue, even when life is sacrificed, not to render the inhabitants of our country more wise, more devoted to the good of mankind, or to the fear and service of God; but more rich, more honorable in the esteem of those who esteem the honor which cometh from man, and more triumphant over other nations in war. Hence, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and Charles the XIIth, of Sweden, who were great generals, and the two first great conquerors, have been celebrated as the first of men. But in the view of Christianity, their splendid virtues are weighed in the balance and found wanting.—They sought the glory of their country by the calamity of many nations, and succeeded to grandeur in the blood of murdered thousands; and that glory which they respectively sought for their country was really its greatest shame and misery, and hastened its ruin.

The morality which Christianity teaches and inspires, is that which conduces to the best good, the highest perfection and felicity of the subject—which coincides with the best interest of mankind, and which is directly subservient to the glory of God. This brief description of the outlines of virtue will not be disputed; but where can it exist except in the mind seeking

that happiness for itself which consists in union to the best interests of the whole family of man, and exertions to promote it, and union to the glory of God and the best good of his kingdom, and the happifying view and contemplation of the most perfect state of the moral system. But this is nothing else than to "love the Lord our God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves," which is the well known summary of Christian morality, given us by its divine founder.

From the holy scriptures we learn that *God is love*, friendly to the highest perfection and felicity of the moral system.— This is the expression of his character in his government of man, and in the mediatorial system, and this is the duty which he requires of man, and this constitutes the perfection and felicity of the redeemed in the heavenly state. "Him that overcometh," saith the Divine Saviour, "will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and I will write upon him my own name."

How does the boasted splendor of philosophic virtue and morality fade before that of Christianity, like the glow worms of night before the rising sun!

IV. We observe, once more, that Christianity is distinguished from all other religions by the *retributions of futurity*.

Great have been the doubts and uncertainties of philosophers whether man would have

any conscious existence beyond this life. The best of them rather wished for it than firmly believed it. On supposition of its reality they imagined such enjoyments for the virtuous as agree with the taste of men in this life, in earthly things, and generally describe their Elysium as a place for the enjoyment of the pleasures of sense, and speak of this as only for a limited duration. Their conceptions of the punishment of the wicked were equally confused and erroneous.

The Christian scriptures dispel this thick darkness, and bring life and immortality to light. From these we learn with certainty that the existence of our souls will be permanent after the present life, and that our bodies will be restored to life in a general resurrection at the end of this world, and be reunited to the soul; and that we shall then be judged according to our works, and our final state be fixed in happiness or misery, according to what we have done while in the body, in this life, and that this state will be eternal.

Notwithstanding the invisibility of that world and that the condition of its inhabitants is not very particularly revealed, or perhaps would not be clearly understood by us, in the present state, if it were, we are fully assured, that the wicked and all who know not God, and obey not the gospel, shall be wholly excluded from the divine favor, shall be given up to the full dominion of sin, and be the monuments of God's holy displeasure forever. The scriptural representations of their state are awful beyond conception, and deep-

ly impress the mind with the thought that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God;" and that we are called by all the dreadful realities of that desperate state, to fly from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel.

On the other hand, the gospel assures us, that the souls of the righteous at death, enter into peace, that they rest from their labors, are completely delivered from all sin and sorrow, are assured of the everlasting favor of God, and are united in the praises of redeeming grace; and that at the end of the world their bodies shall be raised glorious and immortal, and be re-animated by the soul, and the whole man be completely blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. Rejoicing in the clear manifestation of the divine fulness, the unveiled glory of the triune Deity, in the displays of redeeming grace, and in the certain prospect of an eternity of unremitting felicity and usefulness in praising and shewing forth that grace, and in the most perfect reciprocation of holy friendship forever.

Who can think of the blessed exercises and enjoyments of the spirits of the just made perfect, and the still more complete blessedness of the redeemed after the resurrection, and not aspire with all the powers of the soul after a name and a place among the redeemed from among men?

#### CONCLUSION.

1. The preceding view of Christianity clearly shews the weakness of Infidel objections against it, founded in the num-

ber and variety of religions in the world. They say that among the many hundreds of religions adopted by man, as there can be but one which is true and divine, there is a presumption against the truth of each, in proportion to the number of religions professed in the world, and therefore the evidence in favor of Christianity is only as one to many hundreds; i.e. there are hundreds of probabilities of its falsehood to one of its truth. To this there might be various answers, we mention one only, as abundantly sufficient, viz.—That Christianity is equally opposed to all other religions in the world, in all the articles of distinction which have been made. All other systems of religion agree in exhibiting absurd and unworthy ideas of the object of worship, the ground of acceptance, the system of morality and the retributions of futurity; in the nature of the case, it is therefore evident they cannot be true. This infers a strong presumption in favor of Christianity, it is opposite to all other systems, if they are absurd and false, this must be true and divine, or there is no true religion in the world. It therefore rests on its own evidence, in the same manner as if no other religion had ever been propagated in the world. In testing the truth and divinity of Christianity, therefore, we must enquire, is the religion itself agreeable to reason, worthy of God and suitable to the nature and condition of man, in its doctrines, its duties and its prospects, or as it respects the object of worship, the ground of acceptance, the system of morality and the retributions of futurity? And is it at-



tested to be divine by miracles and the accomplishment of prophecy and other collateral evidence? If this be the case, the evidence in favor of the truth and divinity of the Christian religion is full and complete. But these various sources of evidence have been stated with great clearness by many able defenders of Christianity. Our faith in the system of religion rests on a firm basis, and against this truth we are assured that the gates of hell shall never prevail.

2. We infer the great importance of right apprehensions on the leading truths of Christianity. That errors should be embraced for truth in the remote branches of religion, and those which have little influence on character, in this very imperfect state, is not strange, and does not very essentially affect the best interest of the subject, or the church in general. But wrong conceptions on the primary and leading truths have great influence on the affections and practice, and are exceedingly dangerous.

We are assured by the word of God, and it is found true in experience, that "all people will walk every one in the name of his God,"\* and we know that the true servants of the Lord will walk in his name forever—the character of the object of worship, as it exists in the mind of the worshipper, determines his character; his affections, pursuits and practice are agreeable to it, (we speak of those who really believe what they profess, and not of the vain pretenders to religion and worship, who really believe nothing in

religion to practical purpose, but are governed by inclination.) Hence if any man is a true worshipper of the Christian's God, he is devoted to his fear and practises the duties of Christianity.

The observation also applies to the truth respecting the ground of the sinner's acceptance with God. The bible doctrine of the proper divinity and atonement of Christ, when cordially received, lays the foundation of a life of holy faith and obedience to all God's commands, and is attended with a conformity to Christ, in temper and character.

The same observation applies with respect to the bible system of morality and the retributions of futurity. The expectant of the pure and holy enjoyments in heaven, promised in the gospel to the redeemed, will be a practical Christian, and labor to be holy as he who hath called him is holy. He who expects a Mahometan paradise, will not fail to anticipate those sensual enjoyments in the present life.

The truths of Christianity must be congenial to our hearts, and its duties and promises the objects of our choice.

Let it be remembered that Christianity is a religion of the heart. The Christian is united to God, to Christ, and to the morality and the prospects of Christianity, as distinguished from all other religions in the world. Hence it is stiled in scripture, the knowledge of "the only living and true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent," and it is often denominated the fear of God and the love of God.

We cannot omit to observe that the public teachers of Christianity, the ministers of the gos-

\* Micah iv. 5.

pel, should be scribes well instructed into the kingdom of God, and able to bring from the gospel treasure things new and old, and their view of the leading Christian truths and duties should be just, distinct, and clear; they must be sound in the faith, the pure system of Christian truth must be their chosen religion, and to practise it in their lives and preach it to others their most delightful employment.

Religious societies have the most feeling and cogent arguments to seek for such ministers and such only, and when obtained to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake; and to strengthen their hands and encourage their hearts by hearing, so that their own souls may live, and doing their utmost to advance the saving knowledge of the truth in others.

Parents and heads of families have an exceedingly important trust, respecting their children, and the youth of the rising age, to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." They must teach them "the first principles of the oracles of God." It has been a favorite saying that "we must not teach our children *what* to think, but *how* to think." This saying must originate in great ignorance, of the moral cast and state of our children's minds, or of the Christian system, or of both childhood and youth in the seasons of the fairest hope for man. It is then that the seeds of knowledge and virtue are usually sown, which spring in mature years and produce the blessed harvest of wisdom and piety, and ripen into usefulness on earth and final glory in heaven.

Finally, the truth and excellence of the Christian religion and its importance to man, call upon all of us to know, love and practise it as our calling, and the business of our lives, in all our relations to God and man, with a constant and serious view of the presence of God, our near approach to the world of spirits and the retributions of eternity.

#### On Religious Feelings.

THE power of religion has ever interested the feelings and passions. Where there is the life of true godliness, there will necessarily be strong emotions of soul. It becomes us to be the friends of a warm, animated piety, in opposition to a cold, philosophic religion. Revived, living Christians have their hearts engaged and well affected in the cause of the Redeemer. Such as are alive unto God, are distinguished for warmth of affection. They find, by experience, that religion is a vital principle accompanied with heart-felt sensations, such as holy complacency in divine things, and godly sorrow for sin. Where such emotions as these are not excited, there is reason to apprehend, the heart is not the subject of a work of grace. Let us consider,

I. Such as are alive unto God, do not content themselves with *mere orthodoxy*.

Correct opinion does not of itself constitute vital godliness. It is, indeed, necessary that tenets be correct. We mean not to disparage the importance of a speculative belief in the close doctrines of grace. But correct opinion must not be rested in, as embracing the sum and substance of vital religion. A spec-

ulative faith does not always interest and engage the religious feelings of the heart. It is frequently unfruitful, bearing none of the fruits of holiness, consisting in pious exercises. While men's understandings are rightly instructed, their hearts are often cold and lifeless. Sometimes, indeed, there will be a warm zeal in advocating the truths of the gospel, when the life and power of religion are wanting.

An orthodox faith is not necessarily connected with heart-felt piety. And we should be careful not to content ourselves, with an understanding of the great principles of divine revelation. This is often no more than a knowledge which puffeth up. The excellent doctrines of the gospel, are frequently viewed with a philosophic coldness and indifference. These doctrines, also, are often received with emotions widely different in their nature, from the feelings of the religious spirit. They often produce temporary and shortlived joy; like the seed sown in stony places, which soon springs up, and wanting root and moisture, when the sun is up is scorched and soon withers away.

Some would satisfy themselves with a religion of the understanding which leaves the heart unmoved. But such a religion has no vital warmth. It imparts no cheering comforts to the soul. It is a cold act of the understanding, and has none of the joy and peace of believing. We may entertain consistent views of the leading principles of the gospel, and have a knowledge of the connected system there contained, and yet be strangers to the power of godliness, strangers to

saving light, and destitute of the feelings of an evangelical temper. We must not, then, place religion wholly in right speculative opinions. We must not make it to consist in a mere act of the understanding. Though a right understanding of the connected and consistent system of gospel truth, be a matter of the utmost moment, yet we must not rest satisfied with this, but consider corresponding feelings of heart, as being also essentially requisite. Hence we may consider

II. True religion is a *feeling sense* of the excellence of divine truth.

The spirit of the gospel, being wrought into the heart, constitutes the christian temper. A pious disposition is every where, and in all persons, the same; having the important doctrines of the gospel, for its foundation, and ground work. Revived, experimental christians, must necessarily enter into the same views of the gospel, so far as they understand it. The same truths are written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Christians, so far as they have the spirit of Christ, are perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, or sentiment. Their views unite and terminate in the great distinguishing truths of the gospel. For the christian temper involves in it these truths, and where they are explained and laid open to the understanding, they must necessarily propound themselves to the acceptance of the pious mind.

Religious affections accompany a spiritual discernment of the



great things contained in the gospel. Evangelical sentiment has a kindly influence to stir up gracious exercises. Where the gospel is embraced in its purity, it has an enlivening and animating effect upon our nature. The soul cannot remain torpid and inoperative. There will be activity, where the pure gospel has its proper effect. The soul will be enflamed with the genial warmth of piety. It will have vital exercises, such as are sensibly felt, and experimentally known. David says, "Oh, how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day." The apostle Paul, giving an account of his religious experiences, says, "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Bright views of gospel sentiment awaken delightful sensations. Saints find a rich entertainment in contemplating the distinguishing and essential truths of the gospel. And this contemplation must no doubt constitute a great part of their happiness, in the kingdom of glory.

The good word is a quickening spirit, to such as have tasted its power. It quickens christian graces, and gives life and spirit to devout affections. Great is the joy and peace of believing.—Erroneous views of the gospel scheme of sentiment, either leave the affections unengaged, and sink the soul into a state of apathy, without feeling or emotion; or else awaken unhallowed passions. But a just apprehension of the truths, brought to light in revelation, furnishes reviving views, and excites feeling, vital exercises. Such precious truth discloses itself, from the word of God, to the minds of the intellectual and holy crea-

ervation in holiness, and opens a source of noble and exalted entertainment.

The word of life, is dear and precious to the truly pious. They feed and feast upon it. With a pleasing satisfaction, they investigate and entertain its sublime doctrines. Such discoveries on moral subjects then present themselves to their minds, as to inspire them with joys with which a stranger doth not intermeddle. Hence, by diligently and prayerfully attending to the good word of grace, and apprehending its excellence, they become fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The Holy Spirit alone, discloses the moral excellence of divine truth to the understanding. And when he brings the word home with power, and causes it to be seen in its spirituality and beauty, it attracts the affections, and becomes instrumental of stirring up to a warm and vigorous piety.

III. Saints have a *feeling* *across* of the beauty of God's perfections, manifested in his works of providence and grace.

God is pleased to reveal himself by means of his glorious works, both of creation and redemption. The traces of his character are inscribed in the book of nature, but most of all, in the volume of Revelation, and in the face of Jesus Christ. He hath set himself forth as the eternal source of being and blessedness. He hath made all things with a view to display himself, and promote his declarative glory, that he might be known to his rational creatures, and that in his light, his children may have light. What a glorious display of his moral excellence, is made in the stupendous works of nature and grace!



The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. God, in his excellence, is revealed only to such as are spiritually minded. Tho' sinners see the traces of his being, yet they discern not his goodness; or, see him not in the beauty and loveliness of his moral character. But such as are pure in heart, see God in his unspeakable excellence.

And thus seeing him, they are inspired with ineffable delight. Complacential affection springs from a spiritual view of the Supreme Good. Such a view gives birth to joy and hope. Religious affections are enkindled, in the light of his countenance. Do not wonder if his children glow with affection, and breathe an animated piety. They have found him whom their soul loveth. They have come to their soul-reviving rest. God stands revealed to their view, as the *greatest* and *best* in the universe. He has become the beloved object which fills and enraptures their minds.—This sight and sense of God, gives ardor to the religious spirit. It excites the fervors of love; elevates the soul with a joyful hope, warms the heart with the emotions of holy desire, and occasions meltings of sorrow and contrition for sin.

No wonder that the seed to serve the Lord, have been distinguished for strict sentiments and manners, and been considered *singular*, by reason of their devout frames, and the movings of affection. It would seem that a proper apprehension of God, must produce some such distinguishing traits in the character

of those who are accounted to him for a generation. Such as have seen the Lord of Hosts, will differ from the cold-hearted men of the world, and make it evident, that they are chiefly delighted in God. They will make it manifest, that a discernment of the moral excellence of the Divine Character, gives the spring to their activities, and calls forth their sweetest comforts and desires.

IV. Saints find by experience, they have *outflowings* of desire after God.

This will be evident by attending to the exercises of men of God, recorded in scripture; and especially of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. In his Psalms we have an account of his holy breathings. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary." lxi. 1, 2. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" xlii. 1, 2. —When his soul was in great disquietude, his heart was still intent on God: "I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." xlii. 6.

He seems, at times, to have been brought into grievous straights: "My soul cleaveth unto the dust." But still he had vehement and longing desires, flowing out unto God. He, like-

wise, enjoyed peculiar enlargement. "I will run in the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God!"

Who can read the Psalms of David, without noticing the strong and ardent aspirations of the heaven-born soul?

We find, likewise, Job longing for communion with God; "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." xxiii. 3, 4. In reference to spiritual enlargement, are Elihu's words to Job; "Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness."

In Canticles the Church says; "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib." This denotes the peculiar liberty which the godly sometimes acquire in their approach to God. And in general it marks out the breathings and raised desires and hopes, which it is common for those to have, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Saints are said to be *near*, and to draw *near* to God. This nearness, must imply communion with God, in holy and longing desires and affections. Such as walk near to him feel their souls going out heaven-ward. Add further, a feeling, animated religion is set forth in these words: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their

strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint," Isaiah xl. 31. This language is expressive of peculiar freedom in devotion. It represents a soul freed from the clogs of earth and sense, and soaring on the pinions of a strong and vigorous faith. Such is the enlargement which God gives his children. He causes their youth to be renewed like the eagles; gives fresh and renewed strength and delight in his service.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. There is need of care lest we damp the ardor of a religious spirit. A careless, unchristian walk cripples the energies of the soul, and brings it down from its exalted exercises, to low and carnal objects. A worldly spirit is unfriendly to the ardors of piety. Sinful and carnal hankerings and enjoyments, abate the warmth of vital godliness.—Vain amusements, likewise, serve to cool religious affections, and obscure the lamp of grace in the heart. Religious exercises are deadened by these and similar causes. Devout hungerings and thirstings are not cherished, but rather diminished, by a life of sinful conformity to the world, in its vain recreations, and sensual delights. We must abstain from these things, if we would preserve in lively exercise the vital principle. Christian graces need care and cultivation. If neglected, they soon lose their lustre and appear like the dying taper. A lax and careless way of living must bring on spiritual decay. Christians should be strict in their discipline. They should avoid conformity to the men of

the world. They have a vineyard to keep, which calls for much labor and self-denial. Let them attend to their spiritual husbandry, if they would have their souls as a well watered garden. Let them not have their desires running out after the creature, after selfish and sinful objects, and gratifications. Such vain hankerings and pursuits will certainly chill their pious affections, and cause a languor in their religious exercises and comforts.

2. A vigorous, animated piety ever lies exposed to the charge of *enthusiasm*. The truly religious must be prepared to meet this reproach. Such as are for a cold, philosophic religion, will deem the workings of the pious heart, to be flights, partaking of imagination, and transient in their nature. The living members of Christ's mystical body, they who have given the best evidence of their being living stones in the temple of God, have commonly had an enthusiastic spirit ascribed to them. On account of their fervency, they have been supposed to exceed the bounds of reason. Their noble and elevated acts of faith and love, have been viewed as the reveries of a heated imagination. Their deadness to the world, their abstemious, mortified lives, and their hardships and conflicts under the cross, have been frequently deemed a misguided zeal and affected singularity. The Apostle Paul was thought by some to be *beside himself*. Counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and being willing to suffer the loss of all things, that he might win Christ, he was supposed to be

transported beyond himself, and to have exceeded the bounds of sober reason. The same apprehension was entertained concerning Christ. Some of his acquaintance, seeing him so intent on his work, as to go out of doors to preach to the people, when he was already spent with watchings and public services, came out to lay hold upon him, saying, *He is beside himself*. He failed of taking his necessary meals, for the sake of seizing an opportunity to feed and instruct the multitude. And this was thought to indicate a transport of passion, not altogether regulated by the dictates of sobriety and moderation. These examples may teach animated Christians to expect the charge of *enthusiasm*. Think it not strange if it be sometimes insinuated, that they are beside themselves. In the eye of carnal reason, the workings of a warm benevolence in the christian cause, appear in the light of partial derangement, proceeding from a disordered state of the affections.

3. We shall add a word concerning the importance of maintaining a meek and humble walk with God. Such as have precious discoveries of divine things, should take heed that they be not lifted up in pride. The genuine tendency of grace upon the heart, is to produce humbleness of mind. And yet, through remaining corruptions, there is danger of making the vital exercises of grace, an occasion of self-exaltation. Let Christians be guarded against this temptation. Let them not make a merit of their duties and frames, nor magnify themselves, on account of their spiritual attainments. A proud pharisaical temper,

has ever proved an enemy to souls, and should excite much alarm. Christians, have a warfare to endure with this formidable enemy. They have a conflict within themselves, to keep under the workings of a self-righteous spirit. And this conflict proves to be none of the least and most painful part of the christian warfare. But let them be animated in this struggle; keeping in constant remembrance, that a legal spirit marring and eats out the life of all true religion.

Let them live near to God—cultivating meekness and modesty under the reception of his undeserved gifts and graces. Their sensible comforts and gracious frames spring from the fountain of all good. God deals out the measure of their faith. He is the life, of their spiritual joys and exercises. In his infinite mercy, he enlarges their hearts to have intimate and sweet communion with Himself. He gives them to participate in the influences and gifts of the Holy Spirit. When in straitness, he brings them out of a strait into a broad place. When sinking in the miry clay, he brings them forth, and establishes their goings. And when they cry to him from the belly of hell, he causes their prayer to come in unto him, in his holy temple. Let them humbly thank and praise his holy name, for his marvellous grace which hath wrought them for the self-same thing. The meek will he guide in judgment, he will beautify the meek with salvation.—He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Y. Z.

*Living more important than Dying.*

IT is a common remark, that it is a great thing to die.—To those who believe the scriptures the scene of exchanging worlds is considered as peculiarly interesting. And it undoubtedly is so, as well as solemn and affecting to nature. While the body returns to the dust as it was, the spirit ascends to God who gave it, to be disposed of for an endless eternity. The soul is dispossessed of its organ, and hastened into the eternal world, to be made completely blessed, or to receive her portion in endless misery. A scene like this, must undoubtedly be considered as solemn and interesting. Still, is not *living* more important and interesting than *dying*? Is it not a great thing to *live* as well as to *die*? However important may be the scene of dying, let us enquire whether *living* be not still more important.

REFLECT, in the first place, that life is the time appointed for our day of probation; but death is not. In this world we have talents committed to us, with which we are required to "*occupy*." Death is so far from being a state of trial, that it is compared, by the Saviour, to the season of *resigning up* our talents. Is not an appointed season for us to obtain a valuable object, more interesting than any period after this season is past? We remember, that the rich man, who lifted up his eyes in hell, and prayed for a drop of water to cool his tongue, was referred to his conduct in lifetime. "Son, remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst



thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." It was not suggested, that his manner of death brought him to that place of torment, but his life.

Again—The day of judgment will have particular reference to life ; and not to death. When we shall be summoned to the judgment seat of Christ, it will be, to give an account of the deeds done in the body.—An inspired writer tells us, "We must all appear before the judgment of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This refers us to life, and not to death. The message of death is no other than a summons, sent out by the Judge, to call us to the court of heaven. An indictment is always predicated upon previous conduct. The transactions, therefore, for which we are to be arraigned cannot have their special reference to death. Indeed, there is not the least hint, in the whole Bible, that the judgment day will have any reference to our death.

And further—Life is the season in which we have the calls and invitations of the gospel set before us. That speaks to us, *to-day*, while in life and health, and tells us, "Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." We are nowhere told that death is a day of salvation, or an accepted time. It is true, at death our state is decided ; but this decision is made altogether according to our treatment of the gospel while in life. God tells us, therefore, in his word, to seek him early—to hear his voice *to-day*, and not harden our hearts.

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Examine the whole preaching of Christ, of his Prophets and Apostles, and we shall find they ever referred their hearers to their duty in life. Would not the gospel refer us to the most interesting period? And would not the great errand, for which the Saviour came into the world, point us to the season which is the most interesting?

It may be added, also, that death is not a season in which our conduct could be properly connected with eternal consequences. For a moral agent to exhibit a character, choose the offers of grace, or refuse them, he must enjoy a season of rational reflection. Truths must be placed before him, and the mind must rationally act in view of those truths. And how can this be done, when the whole organ of nature has become unstrung and is under the struggles of departing breath? Can we suppose, that the time when this body is becoming lifeless, and the soul ascending to God who gave it, would be appointed by the Deity as a season for the mind to exercise that change, upon which eternity is depending? No; "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time."

As, therefore, life is the only appointed time of probation—as the day of judgment refers us to life and not to death—as life is the only season to which the calls of the gospel refer us; and as death is not a proper time upon which things of eternal consequence could be made to depend, then, *living* must be a more important season than *dying*.

From the thought we have pursued, some interesting re-

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flections naturally follow. And,

1. Does not what we have been contemplating afford us ground to fear that many are ruined by overlooking the most important period of their existence, and looking forward to a period that is less important? How numerous are those, who pass very calmly on with the current of time, without concern with regard to living, while at the same time they will acknowledge that it is a great thing to die. View people near their end, and we may see a great part, much more concerned about dying, than ever they were about living. When the grim messenger of death advances to stare them in the face, they will acknowledge they have now arrived to a period which they ever viewed important; but while in life and health, they will rest without alarm, though God's law be sounding louder than thunder in their ears, and while the Saviour is inviting them in the most pathetic terms. To meet death, having all that to do, at this distressing moment, which was required in a time of health and prosperity, must certainly be a most ruinous step. And is it strange that Satan should use this stratagem, to ensnare unguraded souls? While he can lead people to pass away life as a trifling thing, and place their views forward to death as the important period, well may he consider them as a sure prey to his fatal wiles. Let us then enquire, whether our anxiety with regard to a future state has not often referred us to a wrong period. And let us see that we avoid so destructive a delusion.

2. Since there is so much

more depending on life than on death, have we not reason to conclude, that many, who have left this world with a strong hope of salvation, have met with an eternal disappointment?—There is not the least intimation throughout God's word, of any one being savingly changed while in the immediate agonies of death. Nor does the Bible mention but one instance of a change within a few hours of this period. At the Saviour's crucifixion, there were special reasons for his making a miraculous display of his grace.—We know that the repentance of the dying thief was real, and his faith saving; but how deficient is the evidence that others are not deceived at this late hour, even though their external appearance be equally as favorable? When this frail system is dissolving by disease, wrecked with pain, and the mind consequently weak and credulous, what more than *delusion*, can those rationally expect who through life have rejected and despised their Saviour? In these discomposed moments it is easy to imagine things to be real which an omniscient and holy Judge will never acknowledge. It is not strange, that people should speak very rationally of the fading nature of the things of this world, and calmly resign them up when they are made sensible they can no longer enjoy them? From being under distress of body, and realizing the certainty of death, people in a Christian land, without the aid of true godliness, may resign up their lives with great calmness, and do no more than many *heathens* have done. And indeed, it is not strange that some

who are totally unprepared for heavenly felicity should even possess *great joy*, from viewing themselves about to make so profitable an exchange as to go from a state of pain and hopeless sorrow into a state of ineffable glory and blessedness.—Numerous are the instances in which the sparing hand of God has shown us the deception of a sick-bed repentance. Among those who exhibit the greatest evidence of a saving change in view of approaching death, rare indeed is the instance that this evidence is not contradicted among those who are spared to recover. It naturally follows,

3. That we have reason to conclude, that some who appear to die without a satisfactory evidence of their good estate, may meet with a happy change.—As we can give but little weight to a hope that is gained in the hour of death, by one who has spent his whole life in sin, so we are not called to give up those as lost who have lived a life of exemplary piety, even though they may die under great darkness and doubt. As the wicked may be deceived respecting their good estate, why, on the other hand, may not the righteous be deceived? The proper time to form our judgment concerning characters in the sight of God, we have seen, is at an earlier period than at death. And must we not count him faithful who hath promised? “For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Nor shall any pluck them out of my hands.” We may rest assured, that wherever there is a real union formed between Christ and the soul, while in life, it cannot be dissolved in death.

4. Is life a more important season than death;—then we ought to concern ourselves much more about living than about dying. Should not the most important object command our most special attention? If so, then, let the great inquiry be, how shall I live? What shall I *now do*, that my soul may be saved? And not, how shall I die, that my last end may be like the righteous? Let it be our earnest solicitude, how shall I now discharge my indispensable duty? How shall I improve the precious moments of life and health? And not, how shall I improve the distressing moments of death? Reflect how much more can be done to the honor of our Maker and blessed Saviour, in the season of life, than at the distressing scene of death. Hence, said an ancient saint, “Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.” Hence the Apostle beseeches us, by the mercy of God, that we present our bodies a *living sacrifice*. Would it be wise in a husbandman, who had retired to his field for the purpose of tilling his ground, for him to neglect his employment and busy himself through the day in reflecting how he should return home at night? If it would not, then we ought to concern ourselves much more about living than about dying. Hence,

5. It appears, we are now passing through the most interesting scene we shall ever behold. It is true we are not advancing through the dark valley of the shadow of death; nei-

ther are our ears saluted by the awful sound of the judgment trumpet; nor do we see the silent dead bursting from their tombs. The dreadful Judge is not yet saying, in view of the assembled universe, to those on the right hand, come ye blessed of my Father—neither is he pronouncing to those on the left hand, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. These awful scenes are yet to come. Still, the one through which we are now passing is far more interesting than either of them.—The present is the season on which eternal life or endless misery is absolutely depending. It is acknowledged that these future scenes, which are before us, will be vastly solemn and trying; but reflect, that they will be joyful or dreadful accordingly as we now lay the foundation. The books out of which we are to be judged are now filling up. Would any one, therefore, have a view of the most momentous period of his existence, he need only look round him at the present moment. The period has commenced. The scene is now passing before our eyes! Oh, let us realize how great a thing it is to live!

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*Great encouragement for Christians to labor for the conversion of the heathen, founded on Matt. iii. 9. "For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham."*

**T**HE selfrighteous Jews prided themselves greatly in their descent from Abraham.—They claimed an exclusive right

to the spiritual privileges of God's people. John the Baptist, seeing their error and folly, addressed them thus, "Think not to say, within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father, for I say unto you, *"That God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham."* This passage denotes, that God is able to convert sinners, and to build up his church, from the most unpromising materials.—And although it might have its accomplishment in the conversion of some of those hardened Jews, to whom John referred, was also illustrated in the success of the gospel, among idolatrous nations, under the ministry of the Apostles, after Christ's ascension into heaven. The Gentile nations had, for many ages successively, been involved in the most dismal state of darkness, superstition and idolatry. They are represented as *sitting in the region and shadow of death*. They committed every species of abomination of which they were capable.

A very striking description is given of their character and conduct in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. They are represented as having "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four footed beasts and creeping things.—They worshipped all the hosts of heaven—offered their children in sacrifice to their idols. Yea, paid their homage to *Devils*.\* Indeed we cannot gain a clearer idea of their character, perhaps, in any part of the sacred writings, than in Romans 1st chapter, and especially from

\* 1 Cor. x. 26.



the 29th verse. *Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.* Yet among these abominable nations God raised up many spiritual children unto Abraham.

Upon the preaching of the gospel, by the Apostles, multitudes from among them were converted to Christ—forsook the worship of their dumb idols and demons—renounced their filthy practices and horrid impieties, and became the humble, penitent followers of Jesus Christ, and the true worshippers of the living God.

Churches were gathered to Christ—the holy institutions of the gospel, strictly observed, and many souls trained up for heaven, from those regions and shadow of death, where Satan's seat had so eminently been, and where he had long led souls captive at his will.

These marvellous effects of the gospel upon the minds of those once so inconceivably remote from all good, may serve as a very clear and striking illustration of the passage under consideration, "For I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Some useful inferences may be made from this subject.

1. That Ministers and Christians ought not to despair of the conversion of sinners, in the most degenerate times. Nor should they sink down in des-

pondency, tho' they have long labored and prayed for the revival of God's work, seemingly almost in vain. Since God has so frequently *of stones raised up children unto Abraham*, who can tell but this or that careless or hardened sinner may yet be arrested in his course of impiety, and be made a monument of sovereign mercy? How often have those who have spent their substance in riotous living, and long withstood the calls and warnings of the gospel, been brought to bow to the sceptre of Jesus of Nazareth? Many instances of the like nature, have taken place, in the late revivals of religion, in different places in these states. Numbers are now among the visible and the sincere followers of Christ, who, for many years appeared as unlikely to become Christians, were there nothing more than mere human means, as the stones are to arise into living men.

2. It may be inferred from this subject, that none should give up their attempts to Christianize the heathen nations, tho' their endeavors for that purpose have hitherto proved unsuccessful. Tho' considerable hath been attempted at different periods of time to propagate Christianity among the heathen nations in North-America, yet who can point out the season when ministers and Christians in general, have used their joint and persevering efforts for the promotion of this great and blessed design. Have not those who profess to be Christians generally treated this important business with too much indifferency? Have they not considered the Indian tribes as *irreclaimable*, and with-

held more than is meet, in regard to their charitable deeds, for the support of the Missionaries among them?

Is not God as able of these savages and barbarians, to raise up children unto Abraham, as he was to convert those in a similar condition, in the days of the Apostles? Has the promise, that he will give his Son *the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*, ever been accomplished in its fullest extent? Then who can determine what may not yet be effected for their salvation, if a permanent foundation should be laid, for the support of faithful preaches among them? And should all the churches in the American States, aid this glorious design by their liberality and by their prayers, God may yet do wonderful things for their perishing souls.

It is idle for the inhabitants of this flourishing country, to plead their inability to contribute a sufficiency for this purpose, when so much is expended yearly for the support of luxury and extravagance! It is truly an affecting thought, that the heathen are going to perdition by hundreds, and by thousands, for the want of religious instruction, and yet multitudes are wasting large sums daily, for the gratification of their fleshly lusts.—Nor will many persons spare a cent or lift a finger to rescue the benighted Pagans from darkness and ruin!

Such ought to take heed lest Christ, at the last day, shall sentence them to depart, forever from his presence, *into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. Because, when

he was an hungered they gave him no meat: Or because they refused to improve their worldly substance and Christian privileges, for the promotion of his kingdom in the world, for which end every blessing, spiritual and temporal, is granted to men.

I entreat you, O ye Christians of every denomination, to take these things into serious consideration, and think while you are favored with a fulness of the means of religious instruction, multitudes of your fellow-men are perishing in sottish ignorance. Consider, also, that the *small concerns* and the *little pains* you take for their salvation, is a powerful witness against you, that you have but a *small estimation* of the privileges and blessings of the gospel yourselves. Such persons as place a true value on their spiritual privileges, and have a proper estimate of their own souls, are always solicitous that their fellow creatures of every nation, kindred, tongue and people, should share with them in the *great salvation*. It is *their hearts desire and prayer to God*, that the gospel of Christ *might have free course, run and be glorified*. If you therefore *have tasted* and seen that *the Lord is gracious*; if you have become heirs of the purchased possession; if you have learnt the worth of your own souls—will not your bowels yearn over the poor heathen? And will you not exert yourselves in every way, in which God in his word and providence directs, to promote, if possible, so benevolent and so glorious an object as that of Christianizing and saving the heathen in this land?

AMATUS.

*A Letter to a Brother lately recovered from sickness.*

DEAR BROTHER,

I hear that you have been very sick. From this, I can do no less than offer to your consideration a few serious reflections. To glorify and enjoy our maker is the great end of our existence. In this way, and in this only, may we rationally expect any true and lasting happiness. Our state, by nature, is deplorable beyond all conception, and, unless we look well to the interest of our souls, the loss of them will very soon teach us their unspeakable worth. You will readily assent to all this, but my great object, in this letter, is to prevail with you to conduct accordingly.

When very young, you was brought down, by the providence of God, to the borders of the grave. However, in his tender compassion he spared your life, and restored you again to health. Since that time, he has followed you, every day, with his goodness, and has not been unmindful of you, even when you was most forgetful of him. While his hand has been laid heavily upon thousands around you, and many have been sent down to sleep in the dust, you have been defended both from sickness and death, and have had cause, above most others, of your acquaintance, to speak of the loving kindness of the Lord. You have enjoyed every necessary advantage for obtaining a saving knowledge of the truth, and laying a sure foundation for future and eternal felicity. God has not left you (to his praise alone be it spoken) to run so great lengths in exter-

nal impiety, as he has many youth at the present day. And this is not all; his spirit has often moved on your heart, and tenderly solicited you to be wise for yourself—to accept freely an interest in that Saviour, whose blood alone cleanseth from all sin, and to share forever in the unsearchable riches of his kingdom.—I intreat you to think seriously on these and innumerable other instances of divine kindness, which I cannot now mention; then ask yourself this plain, but solemn question, What returns have I made to the Lord for these unspeakable favors? Will it be dealing with too much plainness to say, that while you have offered a bleeding Saviour, the poor compliment of a few external services, you have cruelly denied him a place in your heart? What answer you are prepared to give to such queries as these, is best known to God and your conscience. It is worthy of remark, that judgments as well as mercies proceed from infinite kindness. As tho' unwilling to let you alone, or to leave any method untried, which might be effectual to your salvation, God has at length visited you with the rod of affliction.—If I was rightly informed, you was brought down to the side of the pit; at least you had reason to apprehend, that your sickness would be unto death.—What now would be your state had you gone a little farther, and launched into eternity?—Why did you not take the other step, and bid the world, your friends and all farewell? Was it because you had the keys of death in your own hand, and could go or stay at pleasure? Oh, how astonishing the good-

ness and forbearance of God!—he is infinitely gracious to the evil and unthankful, or long before now we should have been plunged in the depths of despair.

But what kind of improvement do you intend to make of the late alarming dispensation of Providence towards you? I see not on what pretence you can receive it as any other than the voice of God, loudly proclaiming to you the vanity of the world, and warning you to make haste in securing that better part which death itself cannot take from you. When groaning under the violence of a disease, which threatened your dissolution, did you not resolve, that, if spared, you would never be overtaken again by sickness unprepared for death? Whatever your thoughts might be, it will certainly be folly and even madness not to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Very soon, you must be, not on a sick bed, but in the silent grave.

In view of these reflections, dare you indulge the thought of living a single day in a careless neglect of your soul? But should you do it for a number of years, and then on a sick bed, should be alarmed with the apprehensions of appearing before your judge, and with a view of your aggravated guilt, could you forgive yourself or expect forgiveness from your abused Sovereign, for having neglected your present opportunities, and disregarded the late admonition of Providence? What your views or resolutions are at this time, I know not, God knoweth. Not to regard the advice of an affectionate brother will be ungrateful; but this is unworthy

to be mentioned or even thought of in comparison of that shocking ingratitude, which you will be guilty of to the kind bestower of all good, unless you immediately chuse him for your God and portion.

Your brother and sincere friend.

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*A Letter to a new married couple,  
from a Brother.*

DEAR BROTHER & SISTER,

THE following is a testimony of my affectionate concern for your welfare and happiness. United in a most important relation, one to another, you will probably be partners of each other's joys and sorrows, till the bonds, by which you are connected, shall be broken by the hand of death. The mutual happiness of the sexes is one important end, designed in the marriage institution; nor will it ordinarily fail of being answered, unless by some criminal fault in the parties united. To them, it is, therefore, exceedingly important, that neither of them should do any thing to plant, or nourish the seeds of misery.—Every wise precaution should be used to prevent the beginning of evil. Multitudes, surrounded by many circumstances favorable to a life of happiness, are miserable in a great measure, through their own fault.—Did those who enter the marriage relation begin and persevere, as they ought, in a firm resolution to promote each other's happiness, in every way consistent with a good conscience, the bitter plant of domestic misery would be nipped in the bud—it would not spring up and flourish



as it now does, and bring forth fruit an hundred fold. The avenues to domestic wretchedness are exceedingly numerous. An unguarded expression, where no evil was intended, or even thought of, has, sometimes, given rise to a tide of miseries sufficient to deluge whole families in irretrievable ruin. In regard to this matter, it is highly important, therefore, to shun the appearance of evil. If possible, nothing should ever be done which will express the least want of that solid affection which the parties have an absolute right to expect one from another. A small degree of this may create the most uncomfortable feelings and lead on to a train of evils which will not end even in the grave, but last, in their deplorable consequences, through an immortal existence. Those, therefore, who think they stand safely in regard to this matter, will do well to take heed, lest they fall.

But there is a more deeply interesting subject, which must not be passed over in silent neglect. When I look over into eternity, your present happiness, considered by itself, is stripped of its importance. The life we here live in the flesh, is of very little value, for any thing, but to prepare for another state.—Whatever may be your thoughts of the matter, you are swiftly hastening to a world of unseen realities. A preparation for your departure therefore, ought to be your first and chief object of attention. While this is neglected, however pleasing your situation in this life, you still can have no rational prospect of substantial felicity. It is sought by multitudes, with eagerness, who

take each other by the hand, and apparently joyful, travel all their days, alas! in the road to endless pain. Do you believe this?—Doubtless you do. And is not madness in their hearts while they live? You answer, "Yes certainly it is." Can you then be guilty of imitating their example? I am sorry to think of believing it. In many instances, you are very sensible, the distance between a marriage bed and a dying bed is small indeed. The natural inference is, how important to be immediately and always ready! How great is the hazard of delay in a matter so deeply interesting! How insupportable must be the bitterness of parting, should one of you be called away, without leaving the other a rational ground of hope! Those who mourn without hope are unhappy mourners indeed. But for this as well as all other evils there is a remedy. Were it applied, death would not be the terrible and unwelcome messenger, which he now is, either to the living or dying. Nor is the application difficult or ungrateful, if there be only a willing mind. What God requires is a most reasonable service. It would be acting the part of wisdom to serve him, and of extreme folly to do otherwise, were no punishment prepared for the wicked. Wisdom's ways are pleasant in themselves, and not merely because they furnish an escape from future pain. And can you expect a season more convenient than the present for beginning to prosecute the great business of life? Any better opportunity for becoming followers of Christ in good earnest? If you refuse when he calls, you may

justly fear lest he should laugh at your calamity, and disregard your cry, when trouble cometh. Had I therefore but one request to make to you, whether in perfect health, or sinking in the embraces of death, it should be this, that you immediately make your peace with God and engage in his service. The bare thought of being at enmity against the author of our existence and of all the good we expect or enjoy, is shocking indeed. Now is the time to be reconciled—to-morrow may be forever too late. If the price in your hands to get wisdom be finally misimproved, as doubtless it will by very many, what a cloud of witnesses will rise against you, on the day of decisive trial?

What you have now been reading will probably then come into remembrance, and, if misimproved, will sharpen the stings of a self-condemning conscience. But that the God of grace may give you the wisdom, which is from above, and enable you to live usefully and die peaceably is the earnest prayer of yours sincerely.

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*An ADDRESS from an eminent Physician, in the County of Fairfield, to his children, delivered on his death bed.*

**A**S my children who are living are all present, except one, and as there is not the least probability that I shall ever again see so many of them together, and no probability of my ever again seeing one who is soon to take his departure for a distant country, I now undertake to give you serious advice.

But before I proceed to advise you, I must say something relative to myself. I consider myself as having done with mortal things, and all to come is vast, boundless and endless eternity. For several years past my mind has been fixed on death and judgment. They are now brought near and in some measure realized. But to give you the feelings I have on these awful subjects is altogether beyond the power of language.—When millions of years multiplied by millions have elapsed I shall be no nearer the end of my existence than I am now. What then must be my condition if I am cast out of the favorable presence of God?

Previous to the death of your eldest sister, I thought I had, in a good measure, discharged my duty to my children with regard to their spiritual concerns. But alas! I then found my great mistake, and resolved that I would ever after be more careful to bring up the remainder of my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But the cares of the world, my incessant hurry in my profession, and my love of literature (when I had a moment's leisure) prevented putting my resolution in practice as I ought to have done. And now with heartfelt anxiety and regret, I have to lament my great negligence.

My children are as dear to me as my life. What then must be my feelings with respect to their future happiness? And what can I say upon the subject? I can only say, remember now your creator in the days of your youth. First seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, and other

things shall be added to you.— Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for straight is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be who find it. Give all possible diligence to make your calling and election sure. Not that you can merit your own salvation. All that you can do is to prostrate yourselves before the Great Supreme, and beseech him to have mercy on you.

Most of you have families, and the others may hereafter have them. Let me, therefore, exhort you to constant family prayer for the benefit of yourselves and children; and to constant secret prayer for the salvation of your own souls. What would it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? If one of your children should live to adult years and then die; and you had never prayed with it nor for it, the reflections which would wound and sting your heart, would be next to the worm that never dies and the fire which is never quenched. Each of you carry in your bosom an immortal part, destined to endless existence, and of more worth than ten thousand such worlds as this. Oh! then be admonished to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life.

To persons of your age the life of man seems long. Seventy years look at a great distance. But it is a mistake. I have tried the experiment, and find it a vapor, a shadow. Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and

is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.

We must all very soon appear before the awful tribunal of Christ. And what if myself with some of you should be cast into utter darkness; and you should say, if my father had done his duty towards me I should not have come into this place of torment? Oh, dreadful! inexpressibly dreadful tho't! I can add no more, only my dying prayer for mercy and forgiveness; and that the merits of the great Redeemer may prevent our everlasting destruction and bring us all at the great day to meet together in the New Jerusalem?

When I have passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and am covered with the clods of the valley, and my body is enrap't in cold marble, the above hints may be of great use to each of you.

The advice given me by my mother on her death bed, tho' much neglected in middle life, has of latter years been of very great use to me. My mother, in some of her last moments, said to me, tho' you are so near my heart, yet, at the last day, if you should be cast off, I shall doubtless glorify the sentence of God in your perdition; because the judge of all the earth will do right.

Sabbath Evening, July }  
24th, 1804. }

From the *Christian Observer*.  
Extracts from the Common-  
Place Book of a Country  
Clergyman.

ON RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

**I**F actions only were required, without dispositions, the work

of religion would be comparatively easy. Men may pronounce prayers, wear sackcloth, keep fasts, give alms, &c. These external acts are in their power, and however irksome in themselves, many would be found to observe them as the price of their salvation. But the affections of the heart are out of our own power—we cannot at pleasure change the objects of our love and aversion. We may *perform* religious actions as a *task*, but we cannot make ourselves *delight* in them as a *privilege*.—And yet nothing short of this is true religion. Religion demands the affections—"Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God."—"My son, give me thy *heart*." Here then appears the necessity of divine grace, and the efficacy of its operation. It actually *produces* this change in the affections, and thus the work proves itself to be of God.

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ON THE PRINCIPLE OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE principle of friendship is an indication of the dignity for which we were designed. We sigh for union with other intelligent beings—seek a commerce of hearts—cannot realize our ideas and wishes here below—human friendships and unions deceive our expectations—to find what we want, we must ascend to God himself.

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ON THE LOVE OF VIRTUE.

INFIDELS *talk* much of the love of virtue. And why then do they not love the Bible?—Let any man read the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians—the preceptive parts of all the Apostolic epistles—Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, &c. Was ever so

amiable and perfect a scheme of virtue presented to the world? Surely, a *virtuous* man would *wish* such a religion to be true, though he could not think it so! He would see it to be of so much importance to the peace and good order of society, and to the welfare of all mankind individually, that he would rejoice if other men believed it, though he could not. He would do nothing to impede its reception, but rather would promote its influence to the utmost of his power. Nay more, he would practise it himself, in spite of his unbelief. If a good rule be given us, that will promote our own happiness and that of others, we ought to embrace and follow it, whoever be the author, and whatever its authority. Our own interest is obligation enough. Is it not plain, that every man, who acts contrarily to these maxims, deceives himself, when he supposes that he *loves* Virtue, while, in truth, he *only talks* of it?

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ON VITAL RELIGION.

THAT vital religion is a blessed reality needs no better proof than the exact coincidence of judgment, taste, principles and habits, which prevails amongst its professors. Papists and Protestants, men in the wilds of America, and in the cultivated countries of Europe, persons who lived under the Jewish economy, and multitudes who live under the Christian institution now, have all spoken, in spite of their several peculiarities, one common language of the heart about God and Christ, sin and holiness, time and eternity. Their religious hopes and fears, their joys and their sor-



rows, have been the same.—They have, in a word, perfectly understood one another's sentiments, and entered into one another's feelings, (though mysterious and unintelligible to all the world beside,) on every subject essentially related to salvation. For eighteen centuries, Christians, for example, have thought, and sung, and prayed with David, a Jewish King who reigned about three thousand years ago. Scarcely have they had a sentiment, a wish or a feeling, that he has not anticipated. Whence this agreement? How happens it, that persons so distant in time and place, in speculative theories of religion, and in outward modes of worship, from each other, should notwithstanding so exactly harmonize? Will it be ascribed to chance? Can *imagination, enthusiasm, fancy*, explain it?—Do but consider how men's tastes and sentiments differ upon almost every subject, even where they live at the same time, are brought up in the same place, and trained to the same habits. And how then can imagination, the most capricious and uncertain of all causes, account for a similarity of effect, which no course of education, nor early prepossessions themselves, (strong as these usually are,) are competent to produce?

Take a true Christian from any parish in England, and let him meet one of the converted Indians of North America.—Had them but a common language in which they may convey their meaning to one another, in an instant they will perfectly comprehend each other's views and feelings on every topic in religion—their hearts

will be laid open, so to speak, to each other's discernment—they will “love each other with a pure heart fervently,” as brethren, united in one sentiment and in one interest, who accidentally meet together after a long and painful separation. How will you account for this Indian so well understanding the Englishman, when perhaps there is not a man living in his own town or parish, to whom he is not an absolute barbarian, when he attempts to speak what he thinks and feels about a Saviour and a life to come, about the beauty of holiness, or the deformity of sin? Surely there must be *reality*, where, without any previous communication, there is so much coincidence and agreement!

Had you lived at the day of Pentecost, and had heard the first disciples speaking to men of every nation under heaven in the language wherein they were born, you would have bowed to the reality of their pretensions, and confessed a miracle. Behold, then, the counterpart of this miracle; equally astonishing, and unaccountable upon any natural principles! all the difference is, that in *that* case, *one person* spake many languages—in *this*, *many persons* of every kindred and nation, and tongue and people, whither the gospel hath come, speak *one* language.

#### ON REASON AND REVELATION.

THE greater part of those who set up the claims of Reason against those of Revelation, seem to forget that Reason is a faculty, not like *intuition*, that sees the true natures, relations, or consequences of things, at a

glance ; but which requires nice and accurate management, with assiduous labor and cultivation, to make it a useful and safe guide to us, in avoiding error, and arriving at truth. It is not, like the senses of the body, perfect at once ; but, like a diamond in its natural state, it is put rough into our hands to polish and improve by art and care. So much is this the case, that the improvement of our reason is taught by rule, and learnt as a science.

Nothing more than the application of this remark is needful to confound our common infidels. Do they talk of their reason not suffering them to embrace Christianity ? Let us ask them, whether they have made a right use of reason in determining the question. Have they practised all the rules which logicians lay down for the government of the understanding in its enquiries after truth ? Have they cautiously guarded, in particular, against the influence of the passions in this business ; and that more especially, because *here* more than *any where*, it may be expected to prevail unless great care be taken ? Have they turned the subject on all sides, and considered it in all its parts ; not satisfying themselves with a hasty, irregular and partial examination ? These questions could not fail to silence them, if they had either sense or modesty. The general run of infidels are no logicians, and of those who are, how few, speaking honestly, will say, that they have as seriously, cautiously, and impartially applied the laws of sound reasoning to the examination of this subject, as they

are conscious that they have done to other matters of science.

It certainly affords a presumption in favor of Christianity, that those men who have been most famous in the world for the cultivation of their intellectual powers, and are acknowledged on all sides to have carried the improvement of them to the greatest height, have been sincere believers, and warm defenders of this religion.

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ON SIN, AS AN OFFENCE AGAINST GOD.

How little perception is there, even in the Christian world, of the evil of *Sin*, as it is a transgression of God's law ! The authority of God is little contemplated. If a man's conscience reprove him for some vicious act, it is because of the irregularity and turpitude he sees in it, or on account of the injury which it may do to society ; but that which is the grand aggravation of the crime—its being done against the will and authority of God, and therefore an act of rebellion—is little thought of, and little affects the conscience. That this is really the case appears from hence, that many of those people who pass for good moral characters in the world, commonly regulate their conduct by considerations of moral fitness or unfitness, which are wholly independent of the divine command or prohibition. What merely stands on God's authority they see little evil in, and have no great scruple about doing or not doing. Their own ease or humour, the least possible present convenience or advantage, determines their conduct, and becomes a law to them in preference to the bare mo-

tive of obeying or disobeying God. Hence, to most persons, Adam's sin seems a trifle, because committed only against a positive command; and the neglect of religious ordinances, or the breach of the Sabbath, for the same reason, gives little uneasiness to their consciences. In the presence of temptation they are not restrained by Joseph's consideration, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" And in their repentance—if they ever do repent of any thing they have done—they are far from the sentiment and feeling of David, "Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." David had sinned against *man* as well as God; but the thought of his sin as an act of daring impiety and rebellion against God, swallowed up, at the moment, every other consideration. His crime was thus seen in its highest aggravation, and painted to his mind in colors so black and hideous, as to conceal the lighter shades of the sad picture, and prevent, so to speak, his perceiving them.

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ON THE CONDUCT, AS AN INDEX  
TO THE HEART.

WHEN we exhort men to examine themselves by their *conduct*, it is only as that is an index to the state of the *heart*.—The state and disposition of the *heart* determines the character, and being visible to God, is that by which his judgment of us is formed. We can judge of *others* only by external appearances, but of *ourselves* our judgment should be, as much as possible, guided by that of God. External actions are not always

true indexes to the state of the mind, because good actions may proceed from bad principles.—With other men's *principles* indeed, we have comparatively little to do. While their *actions* are good, and society sustains no injury, from a charitable though erroneous judgment of them, little inconvenience can result; but in our own case, a mistake is fatal.

How great then is the folly of those who judge of themselves only by their outward conduct! Preach against drunkenness, or other overt acts of sin, and every one who, from whatever cause, can acquit himself of the practice condemned, presently concludes in favor of his general character. In like manner, when specific duties and virtues are inculcated, if, so far as concerns the outward *matter and form* of them, the man think himself blameless, the same flattering conclusion follows.—Hence it is, that so many persons dislike close appeals to the heart, and are ready to oppose such as use them with—"He that *doeth* righteousness is righteous"—"By their *fruits* ye shall know them," &c. "If," say they, "the fruit be good, is not the tree good? Can you know the quality of the tree by any other sign?"—No! and no better test need be required, provided you understand the terms you make use of. What do you mean by good fruit?—Such as is fair and beautiful on the *outside* only? Then you might chance to find your death in acting upon this principle; for there are many poisonous trees in the world, which bear a beautiful and tempting fruit, pleasant to the eyes, and grate-

ful to the smell—perhaps, also to the taste, but it is not unfrequently found, that the same fruit which looks well, on being cut up, turns out to be corrupted and bad within. Just so it is with moral fruit. Examine it skilfully—see whether it be sound *within*—employ the proper means for ascertaining whether it be really as good as it appears to be; and if it abide the trial, we allow, that, *being* good, it demonstrates the tree to be good also.

When our Lord says, “By their fruits ye shall know them,” he cannot surely be supposed to intend the mere outward appearance, any more than a naturalist would, who was applying the same rule to the productions of the orchard or the garden. A fruit corrupt within, and beautiful without, is the emblem of a hypocrite.

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*Letter from the Basil Society—  
Addressed to the Missionary  
Society in London.*

**Y**OU had the goodness, dear brethren, to request a list being sent you of the towns and provinces through which our Society extends; as also a plan of our proceedings; and from one to three copies of our Periodical Publications from the beginning of our activity as a body. We are happy to gratify this wish, as far as in our power; and, in return for your very acceptable present of the Evangelical Magazine, send you a complete copy of our Extracts and Collections, printed from 1783 to 1798. To the first volume you will find some pamphlets stitched, containing a full ac-

count of the views and the organization of our Society; which in the main, continues unaltered to this day, except what improvements have been suggested by experience, or the circumstances of the times. As a specimen of our communications, which circulate in manuscript only, we subjoin those of the nineteenth year of the Society; and in case you should think it worth your while, we would order those of the preceding eighteen years to be copied likewise; which, however, would be attended with considerable expense. We should have been glad to send you, at least, two copies of our publications; but those of 1793 and 94 are quite out of print; nor is it in our power to produce a second edition, as the complicated calamities of war, murrain and scarcity, have rendered the contributions of our poor friends rather less than what they used to be; whilst the expenses of printing have risen, and, in general, our Society has to meet greater wants. The nature of our plan is best to be learnt from our publications. Here we beg leave to draw just a few outlines, beginning with our leading views:—

1. The basis of our agreement is our obligation to edify one another in our most holy faith, according to the unerring word of God and the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; in whose footsteps to tread, and to encourage one another in the blessed practice of walking after him faithfully, is our duty and desire. Nor will we suffer ourselves to be diverted from this purpose by any objections whatever, raised by the



adherents of the new philosophy or the votaries of infidelity, as millions, and, God be praised ! we ourselves have experienced the efficacy of that faith, which is the victory over sin, the world, Satan and hell, and which alone is able to form men of God, ready to serve him in this world, and fit to meet him in the next. To preserve this faith of our ancestors, which alone can make us good, holy, and happy in life and death, shall be our final aim.

2. We wish, agreeably to our duty, to direct the attention of Christendom to the signs of our times, which are so very extraordinary, whether we consider them with a view to the church of Christ, or in reference to the kingdoms of this world. We will comfort, advise and strengthen one another, in order to hold fast the patience and faith of the saints, lest when the Lord cometh, we be found in the number of the foolish virgins.

3. In a particular manner we will make it our concern, to strengthen the ties of brotherly love between ourselves, by means of mutual communication and participation in temporals and spirituals, lest the adversary should disturb our bond of union. At the same time, be it far from us to overlook the good that is to be perceived in any other Christian denomination ; but more especially in those lesser flocks of grace that aim at being children of God in reality.

4. We consider it as a principal concern of ours to co-operate, as much as we are enabled to do towards realizing the hope of Zion, viz. the conversion of the Gentiles : and whilst we rejoice at all that has been

done, in this respect, since the beginning of the last century, we cannot help admiring the hand of the Lord in those phenomena in which you, dearest brethren of England, have borne so considerable a share, considering them as the dawning of the approaching kingdom of God, and comforting ourselves with these things, as with sweet and powerful cordials against the benumbing influence of the spirit of our awful times. To take an active and praying share in all Missionary exertions, is our sacred delight ; and, we trust, the seed, which is now sprinkled with our tears, will rise in an harvest of everlasting joy, though we should not witness its maturity in *this* world.

5. As there is always, but more especially in our day, an enormous mass of misery in the world, under which believers, no less than unbelievers, groan, (the latter of whom we ought still to love as our neighbors, i. e. our own selves) so we consider ourselves bound to alleviate the same to the utmost of our power, lightening the burden of our fellow-captives in this world, seeing we too are in the same state of imprisonment.

6. The dispersing of religious tracts, by means of a printing-office at Nuremberg, is also amongst our views ; but we are sorry to state, that, through the scantiness of our means, this method has not been so productive of fruit as otherwise it might have been.

7. We finally think it our duty to stand ready as servants of the Lord, to improve every intimation of his will he may be pleased to give us ; and, we trust,

we are willing to become any thing for the honor of his name. How far we have been successful in obtaining a part of what we have stated to be our views, the Lord alone is able to decide.— If we look upon our own performance, we are forced to cry out, “Lord be merciful to us unprofitable servants !” But whenever we contemplate what the Lord has done for us, in the course of twenty years, we have great reason to exult in his mercies, and to ascribe honor to his name. He has not only protected and preserved us, but increased and blessed us abundantly. Since the beginning of the revolution, now ten years ago, and still more since the beginning of the war, eight years ago, our Society as a body, and many individuals belonging to the same, came frequently into great distress and danger. Last year, but especially this year, our centre, the town of Basil, has been threatened with destruction: however, hitherto the Lord has helped us; nor will he lay any burden on our shoulders, but what he will enable us to bear; therefore, praising him for the past, and trusting for the rest, we surrender ourselves wholly up to him. You, dear brethren, will join us in supplicating his compassion, as long as this time of trouble shall continue to affect us; nor at any time refuse us an interest in your prayers. We now beg leave to submit to your inspection a list of the places where we have formed connections.

The main body of our Society resides in Switzerland and Germany, and, as has been mentioned, Basil constitutes our centre, whence a committee of seven

members, and a secretary, direct the whole concern. The secretary receives all the letters, accounts, and materials for our publications. Twice a month we meet, when the session always lasts three hours; during which extracts of letters are read, queries discussed, and all that refers in any wise to the welfare of our Society, or the accomplishment of our views, is settled. Every session is opened and concluded with prayer; and we can say in truth, that we never separate without having enjoyed a blessing for our hearts, or received a piece of information highly interesting for the kingdom of God. Occurrences of consequence often occasion an extraordinary meeting of the committee. Every member has his own department assigned to him; those among us that belong to the clergy, care for that part of our affairs which requires learning and Theological knowledge; whilst the rest, chiefly merchants, manage the external concerns. The secretary's business is to carry on the correspondence, and to prepare manuscripts for the press, or to forward our publications according to direction; but so that he constantly acts under the control of the members of the committee. Of these we beg leave to name one; namely, our venerable friend Henry Brenner, a person eighty years old, and who for upwards of forty years has consecrated his time and his property to the service of our adorable Lord; who keeps an open purse and house for all real children of God; and still continues to promote the interests of our Society, as well as the welfare of his fellow-creatures at

large, without relaxation. Besides the members of our committee, there are in and about Basil upwards of one hundred associates and friends; and among them eight ministers, all of whom can produce from their congregations living proofs of their ministry; and who preach redemption, through the blood of Jesus. In and about Basil, as also in other cantons, there are also flourishing branches of the church of Christ, that stand in a blessed connection with the United Brethren; and are cared for by Brethren from the larger congregations in Germany.

To the central Society at Basil, are attached subordinate flocks and individuals at Bern, Zurich, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Winterthur, Arau, Zofingen, Wiedlisbach, and other inferior places in Switzerland. We also are acquainted with a good man at Lucerne (a Romish canton) where, it seems, there remains a quiet but living seed of Christians, from the time when, in the beginning of the last century, the rage of Popish priests bro't a witness of the Lord to the stake. We are also connected with an excellent servant of Christ in the country of the Grisons, though we are sorry to have been deprived of late of the blessings to be derived from our fellowship with him, by the troubles of the war. So much we know, that for the last fifty years past, there has been a considerable number of truly evangelical souls in the Grisons; and a part of their ministers unite cordially with the annual Ministers' Conference at Herrnhut.

In Germany there have been

formed several provincial Societies, much on the same plan as our central. One of the most considerable, is at Stuttgart, the capital of the dukedom of Wurtemberg; upwards of fifty places being connected with it. In general, it may be said, that there is a great work of God in that country, where, ever since the reformation of Luther, able instruments have been raised up by the Lord, to maintain the truth of the gospel; and to this very day, there are upwards of 100 gospel-preachers scattered over that neighborhood: some of whom spread the truth, not merely in their own parishes, but influence the public at large, by the productions of their very able pens. In consequence of this happy constellation of faithful witnesses, there are yet many thousands in those parts who can put their seal to the truth, and actually confess that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In some parishes there are little flocks of 100, 200, and 300 united souls, that meet with a view to encourage each other to proceed in the paths of peace and eternal glory; and much might be said on this head, if we durst indulge in what might seem prolixity.

D. Urisperger, formerly of Ausburg, now of Oettingen, whom twenty years ago the Lord called to be a peculiar instrument in his hands, and who is to be considered as the founder of our Society, for the good of which, he undertook even a journey to London, is still alive, and blessedly employed in the work of the Lord.—On his journey to London, he formed in your metropolis a Society headed by the Rev.

Mr. Lampert, minister of the German chapel at the Savoy; which, however, by the early death of the latter, seems to have lost its consistency.

Another Society, less numerous, but remarkable on account of its several excellent members, is at Nuremberg: this is the source of several subordinate flocks in Franconia. Amongst its constituents are two men so richly endowed with gracious gifts, that we cannot be sufficiently grateful for such a present from the hand of the Lord. One of them assists us with most valuable manuscripts, full of scriptural knowledge, and enriched by the results of an uncommon experience; every word, as it were, breathing power and love. Being by trade a merchant, he travels twice a year into the Austrian provinces, as far as Transylvania, and never returns without having scattered his presents all over the country through which he passes: schools and churches, as well as individuals, partake of his bounty. He makes it his business to distribute godly books; and will enter the meanest hut, on the road, to speak the word of salvation to great and small. Though happy in this course of well-doing, he wishes for more ample means to extend his usefulness still farther.

A third provincial Society exists at Frankfort on the Main, in connection with Wetzlar, Giesen, Krentznach, Marburg, &c. Several ministers, known as authors, are among the associates; one of the most celebrated writers of the day, Professor Yung, of Marburg, a bold confessor of Jesus, and the most popular op-

poser of the Antichristian spirit, being of their number.

A fourth Society rose gradually in Saxony, where Luther's reformation began, which poured so great a light over the world. Dresden is the focus of our connections there. In that country there is still a great number of people of all ranks, from the minister in the cabinet down to the day-labourer, who are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but think it their duty to profess him in word, and walk before a wicked generation.

A fifth connection we have at Elberfeld and Dusseldorf. At the latter place there is a company of young mechanics, that have agreed to put by every week a trifle of their savings, with a view to assist in supporting the glorious Missionary cause.

A sixth Society centres at Osnabruck.

A seventh at Wernigerode, which for a long time has been favored particularly, with being governed by an illustrious and truly pious family; in consequence of which, much good is to be met with among all classes of people in that little county.

In the Prussian dominions, where light and darkness are stronger contrasted than any where else in Germany, we have six provincial Societies, viz.

1st, At Berlin, where the number of real children of God, among different denominations, amounts to one thousand at least. 2d, At Breslau, in Silesia. 3d, At Prenslau, in Pomerania; where the Spirit of the Lord has imparted to a common taylor great gifts for the edification of many. 4th, At Biele-



field, in the county of Ravensberg. 5th, At Leer, in East Friesland, where a respectable number of gospel ministers have joined us.

We only mention the central places; to which it is to be understood many more belong.

Since Joseph II. (of immortal memory) gave more religious liberty to the Protestants in the Austrian dominions (till then greatly oppressed) several hundred Protestant Congregations have been settled throughout Austria, Carinthia, Styria, Hungary, and Transylvania; and those that existed previously, have been greatly increased. Through the good providence of God, many truly converted men from our parts, some ministers, others people of the lowest rank, but full of the Holy Spirit, have been sent to those places, but chiefly to Inner Austria; by the labours of whom a fire of faith and love has been kindled, which continues to blaze unparal- leled to this day. To these congregations the Lord has chiefly directed our attention; and partly by means of our above mentioned brother in the mer- cantile line, we have been ena- bled to furnish them with mon- ey and books, such as Hymn- books, Bibles, New Testaments: thousands of which, together with our own publications, have been sent thither. Concerning Hungary and Transylvania, we are enabled to boast of several worthy friends among the Pro- testant ministers there; and, no doubt, much more good is there to be found than we can possi- bly be aware of at such a dis- tance. In Bohemia we have no acquaintance; but our friend, the Rev. Mr. Heinrich, of Rei-

bersdorf, in Upper Lusatia, writes in a letter of March 16, 1798, as follows:—"From a principle of charity and compassion, I have made it my study, for these several years, to trace the good to be met with in the Roman Catholic Church, which I am the better enabled to do, as I border upon Bohemia. Is it possible that so respectable a society of men, redeemed by and baptized into Jesus' death, should be quite void of light, grace, and experience of the love of Christ? God forbid! Though their distinguishing doctrines, resting merely on the authority of Councils, running contrary to holy writ, admit of no coalition of churches, yet I find individuals extremely sus- ceptible of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. There are amongst them bishops and priests of clear discernment in gospel matters; there are laymen, especially in the lower ranks of society, whose thoughts hinge chiefly upon Jesus Christ and his atone- ment. They have prayers and hymns, that one cannot possibly read without feeling a tender love to our Saviour kindling in our breast. Their expressions betray frequently a heart absor- bed in the love of Christ, and baptized into one spirit with him. His blood-bought grace is con- sidered by them as being of in- finite more value than the cele- bration of Mass; sinners' tears better than oral confession; and the humble appropriation of his death, beyond comparison, su- perior to the sprinkling with holy water. Ever since they have been permitted, and in cer- tain instances encouraged, to read the Bible, which some of their own ministers have desired

them to do, a more reasonable worship is gaining the upper-hand with them; and their belief is less surcharged with superstition. The zeal, respect, and devotion displayed in their places of worship, suggest a charitable hope, that our Saviour has a greater portion in their affections than at the first thought we are willing to admit. This is confirmed by those biographies, appearing from time to time, of Roman Catholics converted, and joining Protestant communities. Why are we to suppose that these instances of grace, operating on their minds, stand quite single? If my ideas on this subject are mistaken, they are at least charitable and harmless."—Thus far this interesting letter, the tenor of which agrees perfectly with the observations of several of our friends in Roman Catholic countries.

We shall add a few words concerning those little branches of our Society that are in France, Denmark, Prussia properly so called, and Sweden,

Strasburg, in Alsace, is the only place in France where we have a few brethren and friends. Among them stands foremost a merchant, whom God has blessed with the goods of this world, which he liberally spends in the cause of God, by printing, distributing, and circulating tracts of a good tendency, from which he has the happiness to learn many awakenings have taken their origin: and the seed thus falling into a good ground, has been productive, in many instances, of excellent fruits. Though at present aged, and at the verge of eternity, yet he will rather deny himself many a

comfort, than forego the pleasure of benefiting his fellow-men. We cannot express what a hearty share this good man, who is our crown and our joy, has taken in your Missionary attempts. If God spares his life a few years longer, then he may be a more convenient medium to disperse religious tracts over France. At any rate, his reward will be great beyond the grave. Of our old friend Duvernoi, late superintendent of Montbeillard, we have spoken on another occasion.

In Holland, we have a little flock at Amsterdam, few in number, but abundant in child-like grace; they have lately got acquainted with the Missionary Society at Rotterdam: a connection from which we predict great blessings to arise.

In Denmark, we have brethren at Altona and Flensburg, whose means we are favoured with valuable accounts from other parts of the Danish dominions. Although the leaven of false philosophy continues its work, yet there are still worthies ready to oppose its progress, not only by word, but, which often proves more efficacious, by the walk and conversation also. Among these we reckon the Right Rev. Bishop Bail, at Copenhagen, whom a Society, consisting of many thousand members throughout Denmark, has honored with a medal coined in his name.

The same Society, in a printed address to the Danish Clergy, use very energetic language, in way of reproving the more and more prevailing custom of wresting the true sense of the word of God into Socinian errors, and denying the Lord who bought us. In a letter, they mention the

conviction, that there are more than 7000—nay 70,000 souls in Denmark, who have refused to bend their knees to Baal; and who, if asked whether they also meant to forsake Christ? would certainly reply, "Lord, to whom should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life." In this number are comprised several families of the first nobility of the kingdom.

In Prussia, properly so called, we have a friend at Mohrungen, in the person of old Rev. Mr. Tresho, a blessed minister of the gospel, who has been in connection with us ever since the beginning of our Society. He always has been, and is still blessedly active in the good cause, by issuing publications that have the stamp of the Spirit of God. He but lately complained to us of the lamentable state of vital Christianity in his country, where the number of gospel preachers, and consequently that of practical Christians, is exceedingly small; yet even there, a seed is left, and among them a few of the nobles of this world. The same is applicable to Königsberg, Warsaw, and other places of Prussia, Lithuania and Poland. From Warsaw, the former capital of Poland, we learn in a letter written by an awakened School-master, whom we furnished with books, that the breathing of the Spirit of God is perceptible there in a rather distinguished manner.—The above mentioned Mr. Tresho, writes:—"On Epiphany (being the festival of the Heathen) I communicated to my congregation the news of the Mission to Otaheite. I wish to engage at least their minds so far for this work, that they may

give it the support of their prayers, wrestling with the Lord for its prosperity."

The only place in Sweden where we have a friend, is Gottenburg. Our dear correspondent there has taken the pains to translate and publish some of our prints. At the same place preaches a gracious and highly gifted minister of the gospel, with such success, our friend writes, that his church is constantly crowded; and many are forced to return for want of room. In summer, all the outside of the place is encircled with hearers, desirous of receiving a blessing from the word; and the number of believers increases considerably.

Though we are in no connection with Russia, yet we are informed from good sources, that in the German colonies along the Wolga, there are several gospel ministers that labor with blessing.

Finally, we have the satisfaction to state, that by means of our worthy friend Vander Smisen of Altona, our Society has been transplanted to North-America; and we send our collections and extracts regularly to New-York and Philadelphia.

These, Rev. Fathers and Brethren, are a few outlines of the work of God either committed to us, or at least carrying on in those countries with which we are connected. The scattered good being thus collected into one focus, cannot but kindle the feelings of the friends of the cause into joy and gratitude; but if we were to bring the mass of evil, the power and the means of infidelity before your eyes, it would chill your hearts; and a whole library of volumes would

not suffice for the purpose of displaying the growing depravity of manners, the decay of morals, churches and states.—Still we do not despair; He who has called us is faithful, and our cause is his own. The gates of hell shall not prevail against his church: on the contrary,

As long as Jesus Lord remains,  
Each day new rising glories gains;  
It was, it is, and will be so,  
With his church militant below.

From the Christian Observer.

*Job xlii. 5, 6. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

**S**ELF-ignorance is the necessary consequence of ignorance of God. While men hear of him only by the hearing of the ear, and have no spiritual discovery made of him to the eye of their understanding, they will be apt to plead strongly for the merit of human actions, look upon some sins as slight and excusable, and persuade themselves that God will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss. But as light is most evident when contrasted with darkness, and beauty with deformity, so a clear discovery of the holiness of God which will not suffer him to endure iniquity, of his justice which obliges him to punish it, his goodness and mercy which

render offences against him the more inexcusable, of his omnipresence and omniscience which baffle all attempts to hide transgression, and of his almighty power which renders it impossible for offenders to escape or resist him, must necessarily make sin appear "exceedingly sinful," and convince men of the guilt and malignity of those offences, which before they could justify, palliate or conceal. The latent wickedness of their hearts will then be discovered to them as a sun-beam shining into a room displays every grain and speck of dust, which before was imperceptible. They will then be ready to cry out with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor, &c."—with Isaiah, on a like discovery, "Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Happy are they, who are thus humbled in the dust and stript of every self-righteous plea; and thankful ought they to be for the methods, however painful, which have been employed to produce this disposition in them; for all the promises in the gospel belong to the poor in spirit and contrite in heart, and its grand maxim is, that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Y.

*Donation to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.*

Nov. 1st, 1804. A Friend of Missions,

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